David sets agenda for year as mayor of SLT



Tom Davis and Wendy David are the leaders of the South Lake Tahoe City Council for the next year. Photo/LTN

Without drama and with unanimous votes, the South Lake Tahoe council changed its leadership roles today.

Wendy David will be mayor for the next year and Tom Davis mayor pro tem.

At the Dec. 12 meeting David laid out her vision for the next year. She would like to see more of a “we” approach and less of a “us v. them” scenario.

“I want to focus on council conversation. Council conversation is what brings us together. That will be the most important thing we can do together,” David said.

Beyond the Tuesday meetings, David wants to initiate a column to be published in local media for the entire council where each member takes a turn to promote something of interest to that individual. She is looking to start a coffee session the

day following a council meeting where two electeds would have a chat session with anyone who shows up.

Housing, the recreation center and cannabis are the top three issues the council will be facing, according to David. They are topics she hopes the community will be engaged in; continuing those conversations she wants people to be having.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Remembering Tahoe's kids at the holidays



The Children's Memorial in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Provided

Santa's elves have done it again. Those little elves have placed a Christmas tree with a red Christmas stocking for each and every child who is on our tree at the Children's Memorial in South Lake Tahoe.

No child we have lost before their time should not go without

a stocking for Santa to put a gift in during Christmas. Every stocking has a thought and prayer telling each child they are not forgotten nor will they be. Never gone, never forgotten, always remembered.

God bless our children and remember to hug our lost children in your thoughts and prayers every single day.

– Provided to Lake Tahoe News

Airlines with best, worst on-time flight rankings via Reno

By Jason Hidalgo, Reno Gazette-Journal

Thinking of flying in and out of Reno?

From Burning Man and Hot August Nights, there are plenty of things to do in and around the Biggest Little City. Then you've got your frequent business travelers plus folks who fly out of Reno for vacation or visiting friends and family (if you're interested in finding discounted flights to and from the Biggest Little City, make sure to check out our list of the latest airfare deals and sales through Reno).

For folks who are curious about the on-time performance for the various carriers that serve Reno-Tahoe International Airport, here are the latest on-time rankings from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

Read the whole story

Christmas tree growers battle popularity of plastic

By Lydia Mulvaney, Bloomberg

Millennials have earned a reputation for loving consumer products that are local and artisanal. So why are they buying so many plastic Christmas trees?

That’s the question irking Tim O’Connor, the executive director of the Christmas Tree Promotion Board in Littleton, Colo. To help capture more buyers, growers are positioning themselves as analogs to the local and organic food movement. Real trees have all the things younger adults are drawn to, he said, touting authenticity, benefits to the environment and support for regional economies.

They’ve got their work cut out for them. While almost 95 million U.S. households will display a Christmas tree this season, only 19 percent of those are expected to be real, according to a survey conducted by Nielsen for the American Christmas Tree Association released last week. While some houses display both types of trees, most will be putting up artificial trees, usually made from plastic and coming from factories sometimes located across the globe.

Read the whole story

USFS-Barton promote wellness via nature

By Lake Tahoe News

The next prescription you get might not be able to be filled at a pharmacy or come in the form of a pill. Instead, it might require athletic apparel.

Nature as medicine is what it's being called. While people who regularly recreate outdoors know the benefits, those who are recovering from an injury or illness have often been treated indoors. That tradition is no longer always the protocol.

Barton Health and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit this fall signed an agreement to provide wellness outings for patients. They've been doing so since last year, but it wasn't until last month that the formal agreement was inked.

"These agreements allow the two entities to contribute staff time toward a mutual goal, which is to facilitate therapeutic experiences on the National Forest for at-risk populations in the community of South Lake Tahoe," Lisa Herron with the U.S. Forest Service told *Lake Tahoe News*. "No funds, public or otherwise, are flowing from USFS to Barton Health as part of this agreement. Instead, both entities have agreed to contribute staff time toward reaching a mutual goal."

The outings will be free for the patients who are "prescribed" this therapy.

"Wellness outings will be scheduled for community members by Barton Health providers as part of their care. Guided walks and winter snowshoe outings with Barton Healthcare providers and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit personnel are tailored to the patient's needs and ability level," Jenna Palacio with Barton told *Lake Tahoe News.* "Wellness Outings are intended to

deliver the healing properties of nature with U.S. Forest Service land education in South Lake Tahoe."

The comprehensive program includes options for people with chronic or terminal illness, patients recovering from surgery, and at-risk youth.

According to Barton, time in nature lowers blood pressure, heart rate, and cortisol levels, while it increases concentration, memory, and attention spans.

Steve Bannar, who has been a doctor with Barton for years, in a statement said, "A prescription for nature can enable accessibility for at-risk groups as well as preventive medicine for other members of the community. We need to change our mindset from treating disease to promoting wellness."

To date, Barton and the Forest Service have led six community wellness outings for dozens of people. They include:

- Wellness walk for the chronically ill at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center (fall 2016);
- Moonlight snowshoe for orthopedic patients on the shore of Lake Tahoe (spring 2017);
- Wellness Walk for youth with emotional and behavioral challenges along the Upper Truckee River restoration (summer 2017);
- Interpretive walk for Spanish speaking youth in South Lake Tahoe (summer 2017);
- Wellness walk and facilitated mindfulness for the chronically ill at the Tallac Historic Site (summer 2017);
- Wellness walk at Valhalla historic property for full-time nursing patients (fall 2017).

USFS staff time for each of these wellness outings is estimated at two to three hours.

For the Forest Service, the partnership helps bring another

segment of the community to its lands. Barton is also providing preventative medical training to Forest Service personnel who work in injury prone positions. Barton has hosted three wellness workshops, including a foot care for wildland firefighters, emergency medicine for backcountry rangers, and a wellness training at a USFS all-employee meeting.

Editorial: Federal concealed weapon law a bad idea

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Dec. 11, 2017, Las Vegas Sun.***

Here's a quick quiz that relates to gun safety in Nevada, as will be explained later.

Q. In Missouri, a gun owner must meet which of the following requirements to legally carry a concealed weapon?

A. Complete a safety course conducted by a licensed instructor

B. Score at least 90 percent on a written exam on firearm safety

C. Be at least 21 years old

D. Register with the state

E. None of the above

The answer is E. Under a state law that went into effect this year, anyone 18 or older who can legally obtain a handgun in Missouri can carry it concealed. Buy it, hide it, no questions

asked.

Sound safe? Of course not. But if a House bill that was passed last week clears the Senate and becomes law, Nevada will have to recognize the Missouri law and allow residents of that state to carry concealed handguns while in Nevada.

Read the whole story

In hospitality industry, sexual misconduct often part of job

By Don Babwin, AP

CHICAGO — One woman recalls how a general manager at a Chicago-area restaurant where she worked told her that if security cameras recorded him reaching between her legs and grabbing her genitals he could simply "edit that out."

Another woman worked at an Atlanta restaurant and says her boss did nothing when two dishwashers kept making vulgar comments, so she quit wearing makeup to look less attractive and hopefully end the verbal abuse.

In the wake of sexual misconduct allegations against several prominent men in entertainment, politics and journalism, accounts like the ones these women share quietly play out in restaurants, bars and hotels across the country and rarely get the headlines. Court documents and interviews with the women and experts on the topic show hospitality industry workers are routinely subjected to sexual abuse and harassment from bosses, co-workers and customers that are largely unchecked.

The nature of the work, which often has employees relying on tips, can make them especially vulnerable to abuse.

Read the whole story

Opinion: California needs a great villain

By Joe Mathews

It’s hard to find a villain who can bring Californians together.

That’s one reason why Charlie Manson’s death produced so many media remembrances. Manson represented the time, a half-century ago, when Californians shared more experiences—even fear of the Manson family.



Joe Mathews

Today, we’re too polarized to agree on who is the bad guy. Academically, we prefer to blame wrongdoing on systems, not individuals. Culturally, we’re so diverse that we don’t share the same references—never mind the same enemies.

Which is too bad. Villains may be evildoers, but they can also be galvanizing, energizing societies to protect the innocent,

defend democracy, or address wrongdoing. And villains allow us to recognize the evil within ourselves. “There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us,” wrote Martin Luther King Jr. “When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.”

Traditional sources of villainy aren’t producing the distinctive characters they once did. Mass murder, for example, is now so routine that we’ve become desensitized to it. Is it just me, or do you find it hard to keep all the mass shootings and truck rampages straight?

The oversupply of villains is paralyzing. The mortgage mess and the never-ending fraud at Wells Fargo both involved so many thousands of low-level scammers and so many hundreds of higher-ups that it’s hard to figure out who the biggest villain is, much less whom to prosecute.

California’s power brokers of the past—from the lobbyist Artie Samish to Assembly Speaker Willie Brown—once played the villain with panache. But governance here has become so complicated that it’s impossible to assign responsibility when things go bad.

And just when it appeared that Hollywood finally had given us a singular uber-villain with the revelations about Harvey Weinstein’s predations, dozens of actresses came forward to tell us that such villains are as common as casting calls.

While we once could depend on the rich to live lives worthy of our contempt, today’s Californians have come to treat the rich as saints— since, in this time of vast fortunes and a declining middle, our companies and our causes have come to depend on a few billionaires. It’s worth noting that while California’s Democratic politicians and labor union chiefs like to talk about their commitment to the poor, the person they seem to spend the most time thinking about is the billionaire political donor Tom Steyer.

Now at this point, I can hear 70-plus percent of Californians yelling at me: Haven't you forgotten Trump? I have not. And, yes, he's a bad guy, waging rhetorical and policy war against Californians. But he is an unsatisfying villain, for reasons both personal (his lies and offenses are too obvious and dumb to make him worthy of our opposition) and practical (we have to root for him not to start a nuclear war and kill us all).

No, if we're going to find a villain big and ambitious enough to fit California, we need to look in Silicon Valley, where the object of the game is not merely to dominate the world but to transform it. And if lives are disrupted in the process, so much the better.

When I asked people on a recent trip to the Bay Area if there was one figure whose villainy might be universally acknowledged, one name kept coming up: Peter Thiel.

The billionaire Silicon Valley investor in start-ups co-founded PayPal and was famously Facebook's first outside investor. These California companies have made him rich and famous. And how has he thanked us?

By attacking our institutions.

Thiel is a graduate of San Mateo High and Stanford who rails against government-backed schools and has encouraged people not to go to college. He's an immigrant who supported the anti-immigrant provocateur Ann Coulter and President Trump. While backing nationalist politicians, he bought himself citizenship in New Zealand.

Worse still, he has railed against democracy, called women's suffrage harmful to democracy, and argued that we should be ruled by our techie superiors. "The broader education of the body politic has become a fool's errand," he wrote.

This is monumentally villainous. A man who has the power and technology to reach deeply into our personal lives betrays

utter contempt for most humans. Like so many villains, he's a false prophet, claiming to liberate people with technology while actually holding authoritarian views that would enslave us.

Thiel also writes that he "stands against … the ideology of the inevitability of the death of every individual." The notion of eternal life for some is tyrannical, but also useful. When it's so hard to find a durable villain, aren't we Californians lucky to have one who intends to live forever?

Joe Mathews writes the Connecting California column for Zócalo Public Square.

GOP tax bill could curtail renewable energy surge

By Brad Plumer and Jim Tankersley, New York Times

WASHINGTON — The Republican tax bills moving through Congress could significantly hobble the United States' renewable energy industry because of a series of provisions that scale back incentives for wind and solar power while bolstering older energy sources like oil and gas production.

The possibility highlights the degree to which the nation's recent surge in renewable electricity generation is still sustained by favorable tax treatment, which has lowered the cost of solar and wind production while provoking the ire of fossil-fuel competitors seeking to weaken those tax preferences.

Whether lawmakers choose to protect or jettison various

renewable tax breaks in the final bill being negotiated on Capitol Hill could have major ramifications for the U.S. energy landscape, including the prices consumers pay for electricity.

Read the whole story

No snow in forecast for Tahoe’s holiday ski season

By Tom Stienstra, San Francisco Chronicle

On Sunday morning at Tahoe, there wasn’t a cloud in the sky. The long-range outlook, though not always reliable, showed no storms into early January.

There’s hardly a soul there who isn’t concerned about the lack of snow in the forecast across the Sierra, Cascade and Shasta-Siskiyou ranges. The Christmas and New Year’s holidays, popular times for skiing, snowboarding and other winter sports, are a couple of weeks away.

In the greater Tahoe region, it snowed enough in late November, and was cushioned by snowmaking on recent cold nights, that 10 of 13 ski areas were open in some capacity this past weekend: Squaw Valley/Alpine Meadows, Northstar, Heavenly, Kirkwood, Mount Rose, Sierra-at-Tahoe, Sugar Bowl, Boreal, Tahoe Donner and Soda Springs.

Read the whole story